

**RAVALLI COUNTY PUBLIC MEETINGS
ON LAND USE IN THE HIGHWAY 93 SOUTH
CORRIDOR**

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

**UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF LAW - LAND USE
CLINIC**

MAY 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: Ravalli County Commissioners, Planning Department, and Citizens
From: University of Montana School of Law - Land Use Clinic
Date: May 22, 2006
RE: Ravalli County Public Meetings on Land Use in the Highway 93 Corridor

BACKGROUND

In March 2006, the University of Montana School of Law Land Use Clinic ("Land Use Clinic") and the Ravalli County Planning Department hosted three public meetings in order to gather public input regarding issues posed by current and future uses of land in the Highway 93 south corridor. For the purposes of these meetings, the Highway "corridor" was defined as that area within one mile of either side of Highway 93 as it extends from the Missoula County line to the City of Hamilton.

Land use in the Highway 93 south corridor, and in Ravalli County in general, is a topic that has been at the forefront of public discussion in Ravalli County in recent years. As the government entity charged with addressing issues posed by current and future uses of land in Ravalli County and within the Highway 93 south corridor, the Ravalli County Planning Department deemed it both prudent and necessary to gauge the public's interest and concern with regard to these issues. Discussions between the Planning Department and Land Use Clinic in late 2005, indicated that a series of public meetings in Ravalli County would assist the Planning Department in addressing these issues.

As planned, the meetings began with a brief Powerpoint presentation regarding current and future uses of land in the Highway 93 south corridor. After the presentation, the meetings were opened up for group discussion of those issues participants considered relevant to the Highway corridor. Maps and photographs of the Highway, and information concerning growth trends in the Highway corridor, were additionally posted around the meeting rooms for participants to review at their leisure. Questionnaires and comment forms were also made available to those in attendance and were posted on the Planning Department's website in order to elicit as much information from the public as possible. The meetings were conducted in Hamilton, Montana on March 16, 2006, in Florence, Montana on March 21, 2006, and in Stevensville, Montana on March 23, 2006.

Upon completion, the meetings were deemed a success, with a total of approximately sixty people in attendance from the general public, Montana Department of Transportation, Ravalli County Planning Department, and Ravalli County Commissioner's office. The format of the meetings also proved to be an effective means of eliciting the information sought by those involved in the process. Forty questionnaires and seventeen comment forms were submitted by individuals who either attended the meetings, accessed them online, or received them from acquaintances, in which members of the concerned public expressed their views regarding land use issues posed by growth and land use in the Highway 93 south corridor. The information gathered is summarized in the attached Appendices and the discussion below.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The following is the Land Use Clinic's analysis of the information provided by the public as conveyed through the questionnaires, comment forms, and in group discussions. A complete compilation of this information is included in the attached Appendices A through F.

I. QUESTIONNAIRES

In total, forty completed questionnaires were submitted in response to the public meetings. Considering that approximately sixty individuals attended the meetings in all, a number of whom were affiliated with the Planning Department, County Commissioners, and MDOT, this would appear to be a favorable number of respondents. A numerical summary of the questionnaire results is attached as Appendix B.

A. Demographics:

The demographic information provided in conjunction with the questionnaires indicates that the majority of respondents reside in Stevensville, with other respondents representing Hamilton, Victor, Florence, and Corvallis. Eighteen of the respondents were male and twenty-one were female, with one respondent's gender left unidentified.

The number of years respondents have lived in Ravalli County varied fairly evenly across the provided ranges, with approximately half of the respondents residing in Ravalli County for 11 years or more. Approximately half of the respondents indicated that they were affiliated with one or more organizations in Ravalli County that are concerned about land use issues. The majority of the respondents ranged in age from 46 to 65 years, with several representatives of each of the 18 to 30, 31 to 45, and 66 plus age groups responding to the questionnaire. A numerical summary of the respondent demographics is attached as Appendix A.

B. Quality of Life in Ravalli County:

The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how they valued particular social, environmental, economic and service aspects of living in Ravalli County. This section was divided into two subsections in an attempt to provide appropriate focus on each of those considerations.

1. Social and Environmental Aspects:

With regard to social and environmental aspects of living in Ravalli County, a majority of respondents indicated, in order of significance, that the following were "very important" to them: clean environment, scenery, rural lifestyle, quality schools, low crime rate, nearby recreation, and community appearance. Smaller numbers of the respondents indicated that these same aspects were "somewhat important," while even fewer noted that they were "neutral" about these social

and environmental considerations.

Other social and environmental values not specifically listed in the questionnaire that respondents identified include: sustaining natural habitat, native vegetation, and integrity of the natural landscape; clean air and water; small town and rural environment (2)¹; noise pollution (2); varied entertainment and activities; wildlife protection; historical integrity; and maintaining regional/local character of the valley.

2. Economy and Services:

The responses concerning the economy and services in Ravalli County were much more varied than those concerning social and environmental issues. With regard to local business opportunities, the majority of respondents indicated that this was at least a "somewhat important" issue, if not "very important." Local shopping was not of so great a concern, with a majority of respondents indicating that they were either neutral about this issue, or that it was "not very important" or "not important at all." Twelve respondents did indicate, however, that it was at least "somewhat important."

Local medical services were indeed of the greatest concern to respondents (perhaps because a fair number ranged in age from 46 to 65 years). A majority of respondents also indicated that it was "very important" or "somewhat important" that they be proximate to services and employment in Missoula and Hamilton.

Other values relating to the economy and services that respondents indicated were of concern include: preference for small independent businesses; maintaining and supporting vital downtown areas; limitation on large commercial development and big box stores; and support for sustainable agriculture and organic farming, among others.

C. Effect of growth on the "quality of life" in Ravalli County:

In the second section of the questionnaire, we asked people to indicate whether growth in Ravalli County has "much improved," "improved," "had no effect on," "worsened," or "significantly worsened" the quality of life in Ravalli County. The majority of respondents indicated that it has "worsened" the quality of life, with still others indicating that it has "significantly worsened" the quality of life. Six respondents indicated that growth has "improved" the quality of life in the County, while three indicated that it has had "no effect."

D. Response to rate of growth in Ravalli County:

In section three of the questionnaire, we indicated that, in the last 10 years, over 80% of the population growth in the area has occurred in rural areas, and that a 2004 Montana

¹ Numbers indicated in parentheses correspond to number of respondents identifying same or similar issue.

Department of Commerce report projected Ravalli County's population to number 60,030 by 2025. Accordingly, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were "not concerned," "somewhat concerned," or "very concerned" with this pattern of growth.

Of the forty respondents, thirty indicated that they were "very concerned" with this pattern and projection of growth in Ravalli County. Four of the respondents indicated they were "somewhat concerned," and another four indicated that they were "not concerned" with this growth pattern.

Respondents were additionally asked to indicate what issues concerned them most with regard to the pattern of growth, and respondents identified a variety of issues. Particular issues identified by several respondents include: overcrowding in the valley (7); lack of land use planning (7); loss of rural character and charm (5); loss of open space and agricultural land (5); crime (5); traffic in general (5); lack of, or need for, zoning (4); traffic safety (4); and impacts of growth on infrastructure (3). This is not an exhaustive list of issues identified in this section, and many of the other issues listed are insightful.

E. Priorities for potential land use plan:

In section four of the questionnaire we asked respondents to identify which of a number of issues should be considered priorities if a land use plan was to be developed for the Highway 93 south corridor. Thirty or more of the forty respondents indicated that protection of groundwater, preservation of agricultural lands and open space, protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and protection of wetlands and riparian areas should be made priorities. Twenty or more respondents indicated that protection of views, provision for police, fire and ambulance services, adequate water and sewer services, limitations on commercial growth adjacent to the highway, traffic safety, and light pollution should be made priorities. Fifteen or more respondents indicated that enhancement and preservation of downtown areas, concentrating new growth near existing development, and protection of property values should be made priorities. Nine of the forty respondents indicated that the streamlining of subdivision review should be made a priority.

Other issues respondents indicated deserve attention include: protecting existing neighborhoods and communities from the impacts of rampant unplanned growth; need for controlled and planned commercial growth; prevention of strip mall development; protection of highway travelers from wildlife encounters; and support of bike and river trails.

F. Location of land uses along Highway 93 south:

In section five of the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate in which locations they would like to see various land uses developed. With regard to "agricultural" uses, the majority of respondents indicated that such uses should be allowed to occur anywhere along the corridor. The majority of respondents additionally indicated that they would like to see "small-scale commercial uses," such as gas stations and convenience stores, located only in or near cities and towns, or only in designated areas. With regard to "large scale commercial development," including supermarkets and discount stores, a majority of respondents indicated these uses should

be located only in or near cities and towns, while a fair number indicated that they should not be located anywhere along the highway corridor.

The majority of respondents also indicated that "hotels and motels" should be located only in or near cities and towns, or only in designated areas. The majority of respondents also indicated that "High density housing," with lots of 1 acre or less, should be located only in or near cities and towns, with several specifying that this use should occur only in designated areas or nowhere along the corridor. With regard to "low density housing," with lots of more than 1 acre, the majority of respondents indicated that these uses should not occur anywhere along the corridor, while others indicated that they should be located only in designated areas or in or near cities and towns. A majority of respondents also indicated that "mobile homes" should not be located anywhere along the corridor, while others indicated that in or near cities or towns, or only in designated areas, would be appropriate locations for this use.

With regard to "Industry," including warehouses and light manufacturing, the numbers were somewhat evenly split between only in designated areas, nowhere along the corridor, and only in or near cities and towns, in order of rank. Finally, the majority of respondents indicated that "billboards" should not be located anywhere along the corridor, with others indicating that only in or near cities and towns, or only in designated areas would be appropriate locations for this use.

Other issues raised with regard to future development in this section include: development near cities and towns should pay for and provide adequate municipal services; no high density housing within sight of the river; and provision for car pool locations and historic markers.

G. Particular planning efforts or limitations on planning:

In section six of the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate their level of support for various objectives that may be achieved through planning, or limitations on future planning efforts.

Thirty of the forty respondents indicated that they strongly support the preservation of "sensitive areas such as agricultural lands, wetlands and wildlife habitat by adopting land use controls which restrict or cluster development in rural areas." Three respondents opposed this objective and one strongly opposed it.

With regard to allowing "existing property uses to continue even if the character of the surrounding area changes," the responses varied fairly evenly from "strongly support" to "strongly oppose."

A majority of the respondents indicated strong support for requiring "commercial development to be set back from U.S. 93 with a landscape buffer between the business and the highway." Only a few of the respondents opposed or strongly opposed this effort.

A majority of the respondents also indicated strong support for the clustering of "commercial development in cities and towns or at major commercial centers," and a vast majority indicated strong support for the provision of "open space along U.S. 93 to protect wildlife and scenic areas and highly productive agricultural areas." Only one person opposed the latter effort.

Finally, a vast majority of respondents further indicated strong support for the establishment of "restrictions on the size of billboards along the highway," and limiting "the number of access points along the highway." One respondent indicated strong opposition to the former of the efforts.

Other efforts for which respondents indicated support include: requiring new developments to pay impact fees; roadside picnic areas; reduction of number of billboards that are lighted at night; requiring setbacks from recreation areas and wildlife crossings; and lighting areas on the highway for night safety.

H. Support for development of a land use plan for the Highway 93 south corridor:

In section seven of the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate their level of support, or lack thereof, for the development of a land use plan for the Highway 93 south corridor. Twenty-eight of the respondents indicated that they "strongly support" developing such a plan, while another nine indicated that they "support" developing a plan. One respondent was "neutral" on the subject, while none of the respondents indicated that they opposed the development of such a plan.

II. COMMENT FORMS

Seventeen of the meeting attendees submitted comment forms, in which each of the respondents indicated their support for land use planning in the Highway 93 south corridor. Specific comments range from brief expressions of such support to detailed guidance on particular elements to include in a land use plan. In all, the comments were positive and indicated enthusiasm that a land use plan might soon be developed for the corridor. A compilation of the submitted comment forms is attached as Appendix C.

III. GROUP DISCUSSION COMMENTS AND ISSUES RAISED

The group discussion aspect of the public meetings produced some of the most valuable information we were able to gather from the public through these efforts. A list of the issues identified by the public in the three meetings is attached as Appendix D.

The issues identified by participants are readily categorized into particular considerations relating to land use planning. For ease of reference, the attached list breaks the identified issues down into the categories of "aesthetics and/or design considerations," "location of uses," "highway access/safety," "environmental and wildlife protection," "public and/or alternative transportation," "preservation of historical lands/buildings," "infrastructure," "rights of property owners," "noise and light pollution," and "miscellaneous."

In summary, the issues identified in the group discussions should provide the County Commissioners and Planning Department with valuable insight into the public's concerns with land use in the Highway 93 south corridor. Participants identified numerous issues within each of the categories listed above, with many of the issues arising in each of the meetings and

receiving extensive support by multiple meeting participants. While the issues identified are varied, they can be interpreted as indicating a collective desire on behalf of the participants for the development of a land use plan within the corridor.

IV. SIGN-IN SHEETS

Finally, sign-in sheets were provided at the meetings in an effort to identify individuals who may be interested in attending subsequent meeting relating to land use in Ravalli County. A summary of the sign-in sheets is attached as Appendix E. As many attendants recorded either their phone number, email address, or both, it appears as though these individuals may be receptive to contact regarding any future meetings. We additionally indicated that we will email a copy of this report to the respondents who included their email address in this information once the report is complete.

CONSISTENCY OF PUBLIC INPUT WITH GROWTH POLICY

The Ravalli County Growth Policy adopts a number of “Countywide Goals and Policies” that are both intended to guide future planning efforts and with which future planning must be consistent as a matter of law. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of participants in the public meetings and questionnaire respondents are interested in and desire planning efforts that are consistent with these goals and policies. The findings further validate the Growth Policy and any initiative undertaken by the County to plan for growth accordingly.

The specific goals and policies adopted by the Growth Policy relate to the following categories of land use: Public Open Space; Private Open Land; Water Quality and Supply; Air Quality; Infrastructure and Public Services; Natural Resources and Public Open Space; Economic Development; and Residential and Commercial Development. The group discussion component of the public meetings, along with the questionnaire and comment form components, indicated that meeting participants were concerned about land use issues within each of these categories. Additionally, participants and respondents identified land use issues that were consistent with, and may be advanced by, the goals and policies adopted in the Growth Policy. The consistency between the findings of this study and the Growth Policy, with respect to each the categories of land use identified by the Growth Policy, is addressed in further depth below.

I. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

In relation to the land use category of Public Open Space, the Growth Policy adopts the specific goal of “promot[ing] public open space, and recognizing agriculture and forestry as valued land resources.” The countywide policies adopted in promotion of this goal coincide with those identified under the category of Natural Resources and Public Open Space, and include: “recognizing the private property rights of landowners, [while] conserv[ing] and enhanc[ing] the

quality and quantity of wildlife, fisheries, forest and other natural resources in the Bitterroot Valley; use [of] planning tools to ensure consideration is given to natural resources; and encourag[ing] the maintenance and improvement of public access to the river through public parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.”

The input and feedback received in the public meeting process validates the goal and policies adopted by the Growth Policy under this category, and further attests to their perceived importance among the Ravalli County public. For instance, the questionnaire data indicates that a majority of respondents strongly supported the preservation of “sensitive areas such as agricultural lands, wetlands and wildlife habitat by adopting land use controls which restrict or cluster development” that might occur in rural areas. The majority of respondents also indicated that a “clean environment, scenery, and rural lifestyle” were “very important” to them, which supports the goal adopted by the Growth Policy under this category.

Furthermore, participants in the group discussion component of the public meetings indicated that addressing the “need for wildlife protection and preservation,” “protection of wetland and riparian areas,” and “provid[ing] for open space in general” were all land use issues that should be addressed in the Highway 93 south corridor. Also consistent with the policies adopted in the Growth Policy under this section is the “need to provide for recreational trail systems throughout the highway corridor” identified in the group discussions.

II. PRIVATE OPEN LAND

With respect to Private Open Land, the Growth Policy sets forth the goal of “promot[ing] private open land, farm land, ranch land, and recognition of agriculture and forestry as valued land resources.” One policy adopted by the Growth Policy to advance this goal is the “develop[ment] [of] incentives to help minimize loss of farm, ranch and private forestlands.” Another policy adopted under this category is to “[e]ncourage new development that allows continued agricultural and forestry activities . . . [with] [t]he intent . . . to minimize the adverse impacts of new development on agricultural and forestry operations.”

Consistent with the goal and policies adopted under this section, participants in the group discussion component of the public meetings expressed that the County should “address [the] economic burden on landowners of preserving open space,” and further indicated a need to “group commercial uses in appropriate locations.” Participants also indicated that new residential development should be compatible with surrounding areas. Additionally, the majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that preservation of agricultural lands and the protection of property values should be made priorities in planning for future uses of land in the Highway 93 south corridor.

III. WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY

Under this category, the Growth Policy adopts “protect[ing] water quality and supply,” as the specific goal for Ravalli County, and includes among its countywide policies “[e]ncourag[ing] the protection of water quantity and quality, including the mitigation of adverse cumulative impacts.

Perhaps one of the most repeated themes that arose in group discussions at the public meetings, and in responses to the questionnaires, was the need to protect the quality and quantity of water in the Highway 93 south corridor and in Ravalli County in general. This sentiment, as expressed repeatedly in each of the components of the public meetings, is consistent with the specific goal and policies adopted by the Growth Policy under this section.

IV. AIR QUALITY

With regard to Air Quality, the Growth Policy sets forth the goal of “protect[ing] air quality,” and aims to achieve this goal through the adoption of such policies as “[c]ontinu[ing] to minimize dust and other air pollution by appropriate subdivision regulation.” Air quality was also identified as an issue relative to land use in the Highway 93 south corridor that concerned participants in the group discussions. Questionnaire respondents additionally indicated that a clean environment in general, and both clean air and water in particular, were “very important” to them.

V. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

With regard to Infrastructure and Public Services, the Growth Policy adopts the goal of “[p]rovid[ing] necessary infrastructure and public services to accommodate population growth and new development without undue impacts on the quality, quantity and cost of service to existing residents.” Countywide policies set forth to achieve this goal include “encourag[ing] development that will minimize or avoid additional costs to existing taxpayers,” “consider[ing] the cumulative impacts of development,” and holding developers responsible for “providing the infrastructure necessary within the development such as community water, sewage treatment and roads.”

The input received from the public meetings indicated that respondents and participants are particularly concerned with land use issues concerning infrastructure and public services. Within the group discussion component of the meetings alone, participants indicated that the “cost of infrastructure and increased growth,” “provisions for adequate sewer and water facilities,” “impacts of development on school facilities,” “impacts of increased number of roads that will accompany future development,” and “potential tax increases to existing landowners with increased development” are all issues that must be addressed in relation to future uses of land in the Highway 93 south corridor. A majority of the questionnaire respondents also indicated that adequate provisions for “police, fire and ambulance services” and “adequate water and sewer services” should be made priorities in future land use planning within the corridor. Questionnaire respondents further indicated that they were concerned about the impact growth will have on infrastructure.

VI. NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

As noted above, this category of land use addressed by the Growth Policy coincides with that of Public Open Space. However, with regard to the particular category of Natural Resources

and Open Space, the Growth Policy adopts the goal of “protect[ing] and enhanc[ing] natural resources and public open space.” In addition to those countywide policies discussed above, the additional policy of “[p]rotect[ing] the Bitterroot River, its naturally flowing, perennial tributary streams and riparian areas as valuable resources for their agricultural water, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, fisheries, and wildlife habitat” is adopted under this category to advance this particular goal. The additional policies of “[e]ncourag[ing] the designation of Highway 93 in Federal and State programs to preserve scenic and historical values,” and “[r]etain[ing] current and additional public access to public land,” are also adopted under this category.

Again, the findings of this study are consistent with this goal and policies as evidenced by the meeting participants’ and questionnaire respondents’ expressed concern for the preservation and enhancement of wildlife, natural resources, and open space along the Highway 93 south corridor. In addition to those findings discussed above, land use issues identified in the group discussion component of the public meetings include the “preservation and protection of wildlife corridors,” the need to “consider restrictions on future uses of existing lands,” and the need to “preserve agricultural uses of land and open space.” Similar issues and themes were repeatedly identified by questionnaire respondents as well.

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Under the category of Economic Development, the Growth Policy adopts the goal of “[p]romot[ing] and encourag[ing] a vibrant, sustainable, healthy economic environment that recognizes existing businesses and attracts new entrepreneurs.” Specific countywide policies adopted to advance this goal include “[s]upport[ing] and encourag[ing] quality design and planning for more aesthetic commercial business development,” “[e]ncourag[ing] expansion of existing businesses and business recruitment efforts, which maintain and create better-paying jobs,” and “[s]upport[ing] an expanded, more vital, environmentally sustainable tourism and recreational industry.”

The findings of this study indicate that group discussion participants were likewise interested in planning efforts to promote “attractive landscaping of commercial development along the highway,” along with those that would address “architectural design within development along the highway.” Another issue identified included the development of attractive business districts that would be surrounded by open land.

The majority of questionnaire respondents also indicated that it was “very important” that services and employment in Hamilton and Missoula are proximate to County residents, and that local business opportunities are available within the Highway 93 south corridor. Others indicated additional support for maintaining and supporting vital downtown areas within the Highway corridor and Ravalli County, and for independently owned businesses. Consistent with an environmentally sustainable tourism and recreational industry, the findings of the study further indicate that meeting participants and questionnaire respondents favored the preservation and enhancement of wildlife, natural resources and open space.

VIII. RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Finally, the Growth Policy adopts the goal of “plan[ning] for residential and commercial development” within the specific category of Residential and Commercial Development. A specific policy the Growth Policy identifies to advance this goal is the “encourage[ment] [of] residential and commercial growth adjacent to existing infrastructure.”

The questionnaire component of the public meetings accordingly indicated that the majority of respondents favored residential and commercial development “only in or near cities and towns,” or “only in designated areas.” The questionnaire results also indicated that respondents strongly supported the clustering of development “in cities and towns or at major commercial centers.” Additionally, group discussion participants identified the preservation of the “historic character of existing buildings and communities where appropriate,” the need to group particular uses (residential and commercial) appropriately,” and the need to “consider the impacts and location of use in decades to come” as pertinent land use issues within the corridor.

IX. SUMMARY

In addition to setting forth specific goals and policies in relation to these categories of land uses, the Ravalli County Growth Policy provides that the goals and policies may be implemented through various land use planning tools, including the adoption of zoning ordinances or resolutions, or subdivision regulations. Accordingly, the findings of this study indicate that respondents and participants in the public meetings strongly support future planning efforts in the Highway 93 South Corridor that will be consistent with the Ravalli County Growth Policy. A number of group discussion participants additionally indicated that a lack of planning in general, and zoning in particular, was a land use issue that must be immediately addressed in the Highway 93 south corridor.

It should also be noted that, within each of the categories of land uses addressed by the Growth Policy, the respective goals set forth therein are qualified with the statement that “[t]his goal shall not infringe upon the ‘Private Property Rights’ of any individual or property owner.” Concern for protecting private property owners’ rights and land values was also expressed by the public meeting participants, particularly in group discussions, yet this concern did not dissuade participants from the conviction that land use planning in the Highway corridor was necessary, if not long overdue. As such, the above discussion does not intentionally overlook the Growth Policy’s concurrent promotion of private property rights, but recognizes that the issues identified by participants in this study are generally consistent with the underlying goals and policies adopted by the Growth Policy and the Ravalli County public. Accordingly, these findings may further assist County planners in developing a land use plan for the corridor that advances the goals and policies set forth within the Growth Policy.

CONCLUSION

While this study is limited to the extent of public participation received, it nevertheless indicates that those representatives of Ravalli County who responded to the surveys and questionnaires, and participated in the group discussions, support the development of a land use

plan for the Highway 93 south corridor that is consistent with the Growth Policy adopted by Ravalli County residents. It is also evident that the majority of respondents and participants are both encouraged by and support the development and implementation of such a plan in the very near future.

The study further indicates that the Ravalli County public, to the extent that it is represented in this study, is concerned about the effect future land use will have on the environment, agricultural lands and open space, wildlife, the rural nature of Ravalli County, crime, traffic, and the appearance of communities within the County. The study additionally indicates that these representatives of the Ravalli County public are informed and thoughtful about the effects particular land uses might have on communities and surrounding areas. Finally, the study indicates that there is support for planning in the Highway 93 corridor and the objectives planning can achieve when properly developed.

Based on the findings of this study, particular planning tools can be identified to address the various issues raised in the study, and in furtherance of the goals and policies adopted in the Ravalli County Growth Policy. As the study revealed common themes concerning particular issues, an outline of various tools that might be implemented in response to these issues is attached for reference as Exhibit F.

APPENDIX A

LAND USE IN THE HIGHWAY 93 CORRIDOR (DEMOGRAPHICS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS)

Which town is closest to your residence?

Hamilton:	(5)
Stevensville:	(28)
Victor:	(2)
Florence:	(4)
Corvallis:	(1)

Gender of Respondents:

Male:	(18)	Female:	(21)
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Years lived in Ravalli County:

Less than 1 year:	(4)
1 to 5 years:	(7)
6 to 10 years:	(7)
11 to 15 years:	(7)
16 to 20 years:	(3)
21 to 25 years:	(2)
26 years or more:	(7)

Affiliations with any organizations interest in land use in Ravalli County?

None: (21)

Others:

- Bitterrooters For Planning (5);
- Wild Covenants;
- Friends of the Bitterroot (2);
- Montana Department of Transportation;
- Victor Focus Group;
- Planning Board;
- School Board (3);
- Bitterroot Land Trust;
- Candidate for County Commissioner;
- Friends of the Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge;
- Town of Stevensville;
- Canyon Creek Organization District;
- Banana Belt Realty;
- Stevensville Art and Sculpture Society;
- Stevensville Main Street Association (2).

Age of Respondents:

18-30 years: (3)

31-45 years: (3)

46-65 years: (28)

66 years or older: (5)

APPENDIX B

LAND USE IN THE HIGHWAY 93 CORRIDOR

(PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - 40 RESPONDENTS IN TOTAL)

1. How do you value different aspects of living in Ravalli County?

A. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not at all Important
Clean Environment	(35)	(2)	-	-	-
Scenery	(30)	(5)	(2)	-	-
Rural Lifestyle	(28)	(7)	(2)	-	-
Quality Schools	(28)	(6)	(2)	(1)	(1)
Low Crime Rate	(27)	(9)	-	(1)	-
Nearby Recreation	(24)	(11)	(3)	-	-
Community Appearance	(21)	(12)	(1)	(1)	(1)

Other Social and Environmental Values: _

- Sustain natural habitat, native vegetation, and integrity of natural landscape;
- If these factors were not at least "acceptable," I would live elsewhere;
- Clean air and water (relatively) (2);
- Small town and rural environment, attitudes and values (2);
- Noise pollution (2);
- Entertainment and activities other than bars and casinos (i.e., movies, bowling, good plays, concerts, etc.);
- Wildlife protection;
- Historic integrity; and
- Maintain regional/local character of the valley.

B. ECONOMY AND SERVICES

	Important	somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not at all Important
Medical Services	(14)	(19)	(2)	-	(2)
Access to Services in Missoula and Hamilton	(7)	(14)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Business Opportunities	(7)	(12)	(7)	(6)	(4)
Access to Employment in Missoula and Hamilton	(6)	(13)	(8)	(2)	(5)
Shopping	(2)	(12)	(10)	(8)	(5)

Other Economy and Services Values:

- Churches;
- Shopping;
- The limits to available business opportunities take a terrible toll on Bitterroot children as they have to leave home to make a living;
- Have opportunities to shop, get services, and support local businesses;
- Appreciate we have jobs and opportunities without enticing large corporate entities;
- Prefer small independent businesses;
- Pave our dirt roads now;
- Job training and re-training;
- Affordable groceries;
- Maintain and support vital downtown areas;

- Limit large commercial development and big box stores; and
 - Preserve open space and agricultural lands;
 - Support for sustainable agriculture and organic farming.
2. Overall, what effect do you think recent growth has had on the “quality of life” in Ravalli County?

- (22) Worsened
- (7) Much Worse
- (6) Improved
- (3) No Effect
- (0) Much Improved

Questions About Land Development Trends and Planning in the Highway 93 Corridor

3. The US Census reports that in the last 10 years, over 80% of new population growth in this area has happened in rural areas. According to a 2004 Montana Department of Commerce report, the population of Ravalli County is projected to be 60,030 by 2025, up from 25,010 in the 1990's. How do you feel about this pattern of growth?

- (30) Very Concerned
- (4) Not Concerned
- (4) Somewhat Concerned

If you are concerned, what issues concern you the most?

- Overcrowding in the valley (7);
- Crowding of rivers and trails;
- The county is attractive to retirees due to the quiet and low cost environment;
- The loss of how the corridor and valley appear;
- Lack of land use planning (7);
- The fact that anything landowners do on their own property has potential impacts on neighbors;
- Loss of rural character and charm (5);
- Out of control development;
- Box stores;
- Unplanned growth leading to “ugly” development (2);
- Water quality (2);
- Adequate water supply (3);
- Loss of open space and agricultural land (5);
- Noise pollution (2);

- Lack of consistency with subdivision policies;
- Lack of (need for) zoning (4);
- Light pollution (2);
- Billboard pollution (2);
- Schools (2);
- Pollution in general (2);
- Closing access to public land;
- Extremely unattractive sprawl;
- Impacts of growth on infrastructure (3);
- Lack of impact fees from developers (2);
- Haphazard development and irreversible scarring of the landscape (2);
- Traffic safety (4);
- Viewshed protection;
- Scattered density affecting every aspect of life (sprawl) (2);
- Crime (5);
- Availability of jobs;
- Traffic in general (5);
- Lack of commitment and desire by the present and past Ravalli County Commissioners to provide leadership and direction in land use planning for the County and basically have a "do-nothing" commission;
- I would like my children to be able to grow up in a rural community, not a city like Missoula has become;
- Fear of taxing residents to pay for new growth;
- Roads being paved;
- Emergency services (2);
- Public education;
- Danger of losing Bitterroot River as prime recreation site;
- Strip malls;
- Sewer/garbage facilities;
- Quality of life in general.

4. If land use planning were to be implemented in the U.S. Highway 93 corridor, which of the following issues should be made priorities in public land-use planning? Please check all issues that should be made a priority.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (36) Protection of groundwater | (22) Limiting commercial growth adjacent to the highway |
| (32) Preservation of agricultural lands and open space | (21) Traffic Safety |
| (31) Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat | (20) Light Pollution |
| (30) Protection of wetlands/riparian areas | (18) Concentrating new growth near existing development |

- (25) Protection of view (18) Enhancement/preservation of downtown areas
 (25) Adequacy of water and sewer services (16) Protection of property values
 (23) Provision of police, fire and ambulance services (9) Streamlining subdivision review

Other Issues:

- Protecting existing neighborhoods and communities from the impacts of rampant, unplanned growth;
 - We need controlled and planned commercial growth (no need to promote growth);
 - Please don't allow growth of strip mall shopping areas;
 - Protect traveling cars from deer and other wildlife encounters;
 - More growth means more junk and used cars along Highway 93 and that is not good;
 - Keep areas rural (support farms and ranches);
 - Support bike trail and river trail.
5. Please mark the location along the Highway 93 corridor from Florence to Hamilton where each of the following types of development should occur.

	Only in or near cities & towns	Only in rural areas	Anywhere along the corridor	Only in designated areas	Nowhere along the corridor
Agriculture (pasture, crops)	(1)	(6)	(31)	(2)	-
Small scale commercial (gas stations, convenience stores)	(21)	(1)	(3)	(16)	(1)
Large scale commercial (supermarkets, discount stores)	(21)	-	(1)	(5)	(12)
Hotels and Motels	(27)	-	(1)	(11)	(2)
High density housing (lot size of 1 acre or less)	(20)	-	(2)	(8)	(8)
Low density housing (lot	(6)	(4)	(7)	(20)	(2)

size of more than 1 acre)					
Mobile Homes	(5)	(1)	(2)	(9)	(20)
Industry (warehouses, light manufacturing)	(10)	(1)	(1)	(19)	(15)
Billboards	(7)	(1)	-	(7)	(24)

Other future development:

- Development near cities and towns should pay for and provide adequate municipal services (i.e., adequate roads, police, fire, schools, water/sewer);
- No high density housing within sight of the river;
- Car pool locations;
- Historical markers.

6. Please indicate your level of support for each of the following.

	Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Provide for open space along U.S. 93 to protect wildlife and scenic areas and highly productive agricultural areas.	(32)	(3)	(2)	(1)	-
Establish restrictions on the size of billboards along the highway.	(32)	(3)	(2)	-	(1)
Preserve sensitive areas such as agricultural lands, wetlands and wildlife habitat by adopting land use controls which restrict or cluster development in rural areas.	(30)	(4)	-	(3)	(1)
Cluster commercial development in cities and towns or at major commercial centers.	(28)	(7)	(2)	(1)	-

Limit the number of access points along the highway.	(27)	(8)	(2)	(1)	-
Require commercial development to be set back from U.S. 93 with a landscape buffer between the business and the highway.	(21)	(7)	(5)	(3)	(1)
Allow existing property uses to continue even if the character of the surrounding area changes.	(8)	(7)	(4)	(8)	(8)

Other:

- Require new developments to pay impact fees equal to impacts;
- Roadside picnic areas;
- Reduce number of billboards that are lighted at night;
- Absolutely no billboards along Highway 93 or anywhere else in the valley and get rid of existing billboards;
- Require setbacks from recreational areas and wildlife crossings;
- Lighted areas on highway for night safety.

7. Do you support the development of a land use plan for the U.S. 93 corridor?

(28) Strongly Support

(9) Support

(1) Neutral

(0) Oppose

(0) Strongly Oppose

APPENDIX C

RAVALLI COUNTY PUBLIC MEETING COMMENT FORM SUMMARY

(1) I would like decisions about land use to consider the children born seven generations from now. I want them to have clean well water, appropriate septic, access to locally grown food including meat and wild foods. I want them to have peaceful learning environments and parents that are fully and creatively employed. So the question to ask is "will this decision be a good solution for the next 175 years?"

(2) It is my hope that the issue of planning for the Highway 93 corridor can be expedited. Time is short!

(3) I think it would strongly benefit the community along and off the highway if better signage was used. I especially think the towns of Stevensville and Corvallis should be listed on the green signs (mileage to) all along 93 from Missoula to Sula. This would have excellent economic benefits (i.e., 6 miles to Stevensville cutoff, route number).

(4) My wife and I recently moved to the area after buying my parents home in Stevensville. I was born in Missoula and have been in and out of the area all my life of 56 years.

My parents moved west when I was young to seek better employment to Spokane then to Seattle where Dad worked for Boeing. As time is, I finally got my chance to return to Montana and retire. I have always enjoyed the open spaces but it appears to be the same thing is going to happen in the Bitterroot that happened to rural Pierce County in western Washington where growth is out of control because lack of leadership (growth management act was passed in 1990 but was largely ignored because of big money). We hope the County Commissioners will take heed before it gets like what we left. It was truly a "rat race."

(5) Please retain what is left of our rural, small communities and support farm and ranch needs.

(6) These comments however implemented cannot be done with "piecemeal" planning and zoning. For example, to preserve the open space property owners need "TDR" or other means to derive value from their land. Therefore, the entire county needs to be looked at even if it requires an interim procedure to prevent the current "no planning" trend. I have worked on many master plans and land use matters throughout my career as a developer and member of NAHB and civic association board member and would welcome any invitation to assist on this very important issue. Keith Kubista, 528 Redtail Hawk Lane, Stevensville, MT 59870, (406) 777-1116, kedtailhawk@netzero.net.

(7) The only way to protect and preserve the rural and scenic character of the corridor and county and also realistically manage land use is to implement a county-wide zoning ordinance. The ordinance should set detailed requirements for all aspects of land use. These requirements should define categories of use relating to agriculture, residential, commercial, etc. The requirements must include intensity and layout. Also, there should be maps of these uses with overlay zones for the 93 corridor, airports, historic sites, and water supply areas or other special or unusual areas. The corridor needs to have growth directed to the existing town centers/areas to limit public costs. Commercial access should be very limited. A critical mass of open space needs to remain for viewshed protection and an open rural scenic feel. Design standards with deep setbacks from row line, wetlands and riparian areas are vital. There should also be landscape buffers, underground utilities and architectural standards such as all natural materials on exteriors of buildings. Height and size limits need to be considered for viewshed protection and to avoid conflicts with adjacent parcels. I would also suggest very limited development on the east side to protect the Bitterroot river. Perhaps only recreational and low impact uses should be allowed, and again views of the river are important to protect.

(8) Need to control where a house can be built. What color the house is painted. No billboards along highway. Businesses must look nice along the highway. Planning board must keep the highway looking nice.

(9) Thank you for the opportunity. If in fact Ravalli County reaches a population of 60,000 by 2028, that alone dictates a "game plan" is needed to address all facets of growth. No longer can an answer of "its OK" to every request be granted. Planning is absolutely essential.

Special interest groups cannot dictate when, what and why.

(10) I am encouraged that this study is being done. I hope the results will be put into action ASAP and regulation developed to support the document. The growth policy has sat on the shelf without regulations for too long. Commissioners: Please ACT on this study! Before it's too late! We need to be "proactive," not "reactive." The Highway corridor and agricultural land in this community is the most valuable to haphazard development. This is a good place to focus on and put community taxpayer dollars to work! Thank you.

(11) I think this county needs a renewed interest in planning and zoning. There is a lack of leadership on the part of the County Commissioners to do anything that would restrict the ever-increasing development. I understand that there presently are 500 homes in the valley that are not occupied. Why do we need to build thousands more? Passing appropriate impact fees for developers should be a high priority consideration for the commissioners.

(12) A plan needs to be adopted to prevent the "junkyard" appearance of development from north of Woodside to Hamilton. This is the worst area but similar "ghetto style" building and development are appearing along the entire corridor. Time to stop taking and surveying and take some concrete planning and zoning action.

(13) I hope this comment sheet gets some action started. So far we are way behind in zoning and planning.

(14) We already have a land use plan for the corridor. This plan intends U.S. 93 to be like Brooks Street in Missoula. The issue is do we got a different plan so we can get a different result.

(15) This is one of the most beautiful valleys Montana has to offer, I feel it is extremely important to set guidelines, and plan, to at least control growth in this area. Our rivers and our mountains must be protected to ensure future generations have the same chance to enjoy the beauty, fish, and game of the Bitterroot valley.

(16) Thanks for the opportunity to comment. We need to avoid strip development and strip malls along Highway 93.

(17) My family would support any means of forcing the County Commissioners to immediately enact strong land use regulations to protect the property values of existing residents. They should move immediately on: zoning; impact fees; and strong subdivision regulations, etc.

APPENDIX D

ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

I. AESTHETICS AND/OR DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- A. Need for attractive landscaping of commercial development along highway (4);
- B. Need for provisions concerning trees and landscaping in general (2);
- C. Consider clean-up of trash and prevention of litter;
- D. Need for regulation of signs (2);
- E. Provide for open space within subdivisions/residential developments (2);

- F. Need for attractive/consistent street lighting;
- G. Consider aesthetics of existing agricultural lands (3);
- H. Address existing and future billboards;
- I. Address architectural design within development along highway (4);
- J. Provide for open space in general (3);
- K. Provide for and/or protect viewsheds (2);
- L. Provide for adequate park space with increased development;
- M. Address unattractiveness of existing uses;
- N. Address proximity of development to highway (5);
- O. Need to provide for recreational trail systems throughout highway corridor (connect with fishing accesses, river system, trail-heads, bike paths);
- P. Address appropriate and attractive reclamation of gravel mining sites;
- Q. Address square footage of future commercial buildings;
- R. Address building height;
- S. Consider density of existing and future development (more or less is question) (2);
- T. Consider development in accordance with community character (preserve sense of "place") (3);
- U. Consider regulation of power lines;
- V. Provide for compatible fencing in neighborhoods and commercial developments.

II. LOCATION OF USES:

- A. Need to group commercial uses in appropriate locations (3);
- B. Need business districts surrounded by open land;

- C. Consider proximity of residential development to city centers;
- D. Consider impacts and location of uses in decades to come (2);
- E. Address sprawl as it concerns placement of commercial development (2);
- F. Address need to group particular uses appropriately (2);
- G. Consider parking requirements and location of parking facilities;
- H. Consider compatibility of residential development with surrounding uses;
- I. Consider development in conjunction with existing landscape and land contours.

III. HIGHWAY ACCESS/SAFETY:

- A. Address issues concerned with frontage roads to connect businesses (2);
- B. Potential safety issues posed by traffic both existing and with increased development (3);
- C. Safety issues posed by school buses stopping on the highway;
- D. Potential need for permits regulating access;
- E. Address increased highway access in general (3);
- F. Potential for connecting secondary or parallel county roads with highway;
- G. Address need for appropriate highway access to serve increased development;
- H. Need to work with existing landowners to coordinate highway access;
- I. Need to ensure/preserve user safety in connection with bike paths.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION:

- A. Address air quality;

- B. Address water quality;
- C. Address need for wildlife protection and preservation (3);
- D. Prevention of wildlife access to highway;
- E. Consider protection of wetlands and riparian areas;
- F. Consider proximity of future development and roadways to wetlands and riparian areas (2);
- G. Preserve and protect wildlife corridors (2).

V. PUBLIC AND/OR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION:

- A. Consider need for public transportation system to address increased traffic in corridor (2);
- B. Education of public regarding alternative/mass transportation issues and means.

VI. PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL LANDS/BUILDINGS:

- A. Consider restrictions on future uses of existing lands;
- B. Address fears and/or potential of loss of rural character of the corridor;
- C. Need to preserve agricultural uses of land;
- D. Need to preserve open space;
- E. Preserve historic character of existing buildings and communities where appropriate;
- F. Consider integrating and connecting existing natural areas;
- G. Provide for development and implementation of alternative agricultural opportunities on existing agricultural lands.

VII. INFRASTRUCTURE:

- A. Address costs of infrastructure with increased growth (3);

- B. Provisions for adequate sewer and water facilities (3);
- C. Address impacts of development on school facilities;
- D. Ensure growth is sustainable;
- E. Address impacts of increased roads that will accompany future development;
- F. Consider potential tax increases to existing landowner with increased development and particular uses.

VIII. RIGHTS OF PROPERTY OWNERS:

- A. Need to address question of whether we can tell people what they can and cannot do with their land;
- B. Address concern of forcing restrictions on landowners (2);
- C. Address potential takings issues;
- D. Address economic burden on landowners of preserving open space (3).

IX. NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION:

- A. Need to address impacts of light with residential/commercial development near highway (5);
- B. Need for noise control in residential development near highway (3).

X. MISCELLANEOUS:

- A. Need to encourage/enforce business compliance with existing ordinances;
- B. Need to ensure corridor is liveable;
- C. Ensure that planning efforts are visionary and not short-lived (3);
- D. Address perceived need for zoning controls (3);

- E. Address need to act immediately (2);
- F. Need to ensure predictability in development;
- G. Consider potential development and impacts of casinos;
- H. Need to acknowledge expertise of planning professionals;
- I. Need top-down planning;
- J. Increase community awareness of planning “tools”;
- K. Implement adequate and accepted detail into planning provisions;
- L. Ensure future planning is done in accordance with growth policy.

APPENDIX E

SIGN-IN SHEET INFORMATION FROM RAVALLI COUNTY PUBLIC MEETINGS

Hamilton Meeting - March 14, 2006:

- Carolyn Weisbecker; 114 Roaring Lion Road, Hamilton, MT 59840; (406) 375-9317; carolyn4commissioner@cybernet1.com;
- Carl Fox; 150 Sinopah; (406) 821-3762;
- Kathleen Driscoll; 116 N. 9th; Hamilton; (406) 363-4236; driscoll@bresnan.net;
- Darlene Jevning; 938 Hwy 93 N.; Victor, MT; (406) 961-3257; darlene@stargazercocker.com;
- Jim Curran; 1632 Mozart Way; Corvallis; (406) 961-5446; edann@cybernet.1;
- Dan Huls; 1769 Sutherland; Corvallis; (406) 961-3779; danhuls@bitterroot.net;
- Pam Horwich; 711 Mihara Lane; Corvallis; (406) 961-3384.

Florence Meeting - March 21, 2006:

- Anthony Quirini; (406) 570-3442;
- Elloic Jeter; 5063 Highway 93; Florence; (406) 777-5246;
- Saul Segler; (406) 542-0141;
- Bob Memmer; P.O. Box 367; Florence; (406) 777-2985;
- Linda Dworak; P.O. Box 1663; Hamilton; (406) 363-6489;
- Geoff Serata; 616 S. 6th; Hamilton; (406) 369-1336;
- Ben Hillicoss; 5115 Gunsight Lane; Florence, MT 59833; (406) 777-0187; benhilicoss@humtor.myrf.net;

- Shane Stack; 2331 South 7th W.; Missoula, MT 59801; (406) 523-5830;
sstack@mt.gov;
- Candace Jerke; 343 One Horse Creek Rd.; Florence, MT 59833; (406) 273-0002;
medbow@bigsky.net;
- Pat Basting; MDT; Missoula;
- Kathleen Driscoll; 116 N. 9th; Hamilton, MT; (406) 363-4236;
driscoll@bresnan.net;

Stevensville Meeting - March 23, 2006:

- Robert and Nancy Kares; 144 Kootenai Creek Rd.; (406) 777-2902;
barnkat@hotmail.com;
- Lori Schallenberger; 20 Lost Lamb Lane; Hamilton; (406) 363-0770;
- Sharon Hayes; 520 Mission St.; (406) 360-1628;
- M. and D. Binkerd; 3722 East Side Highway; (406) 777-4345;
- Michael Howell; 215 Main St.; (406) 777-3928; thestar@bitterroot.net;
- Ed Cummings; 237 Schearbrook; (406) 777-5446;
- Mike Cummings;
- Carole Cummings; 237 Schearbrook; (406) 777-5446;
- Kent Kubista; 528 Redtail Hawk Lane; (406) 777-1116; redtailhawk@netzero.net;
- Gene Bauraker; Victor, MT; (406) 642-3821;
- Marina Weatherly; P.O. Box 565; Stevensville, MT; (406) 777-3546;
mwcw@bigsky.net;
- W.E. Malone; (406) 777-3625;
- Tom Ruffatto; 238 Bass Creek Rd.; Stevensville, MT; (406) 777-3510;

cattleco@bitterroot.net;

- Les Rutledge; 3818 Salish Trail; Stevensville, MT; (406) 777-2503;
rutledgelt@montana.com.